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PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION...

Effects of Pilot Certificate Plan Studied

The effects and apparent limitations of two of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's five pilot food certificate programs for low-income and welfare mothers and infants are detailed in a study released May 17 by the Food and Nutrition Service and Cornell University. The study was directed by Dr. David L. Call, Professor of Food Economics, and Dr. Robert E. Wunderle of Cornell's Graduate School of Nutrition.

Some highlights of the study, made in Chicago, Ill., and Bibb County, Ga:

- Based on intake data, infants up to 6 months of age in both program participant groups and control groups of non-participants had an average total consumption of milk plus formula about equal to consumption levels that have been found in higher-income families.
- For infants 6 through 12 months of age in all sample groups, average total consumption of milk plus formula was greater than levels that have been found in higher-income populations.
- The food certificate plan did not significantly increase milk and formula intakes by infants. It also appeared that the program did not encourage substitution of commercially-prepared infant formula for whole milk for infants 6 months to a year old; thus it did not contribute to the intakes of iron in this age group.
- There was no consistent increase of milk intakes of either pregnant women or mothers of infants.
- The program was well accepted by participants, with few difficulties reported in using the certificates, and with foods purchasable by the certificates judged adequate by most adult participants.

The study concluded that the major impact of the pilot programs was to replace cash expenditures with certificates, which had the effect of extending family income.

The Chicago and Bibb County programs had participation rates of approximately 62 percent and 42 percent, respectively, of eligibles. When the participation rates were estimated last November and December, mothers and infants taking part were 8,608 in Chicago and 1,529 in Bibb County.

The five pilot programs, and the evaluation study, followed the recommendation of panels concerned with nutrition of vulnerable groups, at the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition and Health. The first test opened in three welfare districts of Chicago in February 1970. In April and May, respectively, Yakima County, Wash., and the Bibb County programs started. Brazos County, Tex., began operating in July, and the St. Johnsbury-Newport welfare districts in Vermont in August.

Women living in the program areas can qualify for food certificates for the period of eligibility for themselves and their infants if they are in any one of these situations:

- Receiving public assistance.
- Participating in the Food Stamp Program.
- Referred by prenatal or well baby clinics.
- Have income and resources not exceeding food stamp eligibility requirements.

Under the plan, each eligible woman receives \$5 worth of certificates per month during pregnancy and for one year after delivery. During that year, she receives another \$10 in certificates per month to buy milk, iron-fortified infant formulas

and baby cereals for each child up to one year old.

Latest estimates for March 1971 show a total of 12,760 mothers and infants participating in the five areas. They received \$94,635 worth of certificates.

FNS Administrator Edward J. Hekman said that comments on the two-area study and its implications have been requested from local officials and medical personnel involved in the operation of all of the pilot certificate plans.

Mr. Hekman said USDA is reviewing the report of Dr. Call's study, and will consider all comments from cooperators before deciding on the future of the experimental program. "However, the study raises sufficient questions to preclude any geographic expansion of the pilot programs at this time," he said.

Copies of the complete report are being made available to cooperating agencies. Others interested may purchase copies at \$1.00 each. Checks or money orders payable to Food and Nutrition Service may be mailed to: FNS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

MICHIGAN CITY is the site of Indiana's first "self-service" distribution center--a supermarket-like facility that is being used in many areas to provide food to needy families through USDA's direct food assistance program. Over 4,000 families in the Michigan City area are being served by the new center, which provides a better choice of foods, a pleasant atmosphere, and allows people to wait inside rather than stand outside in line.

FOOD HELP CONTINUES TO EXPAND

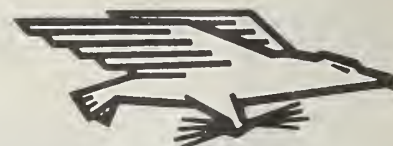
Significant progress in food assistance to needy children and families in the two years since President Nixon's "Hunger Message" of May 6, 1969, was reported this month by Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng, as preliminary estimates on USDA's food assistance programs became available for March:

- 14.5 million needy people took part in the family food assistance programs. This is the largest ever, and compares with 9.1 million for March 1970 and 7 million two years ago.
- 7.1 million children from needy families received free or reduced price lunches at school in March under the National School Lunch Program. This is also the largest ever, and compares with 5 million last year and 3.5 million in March 1969.
- Total participation in the National School Lunch Program was 24.5 million children in March this year, as against 22.4 million a year ago and 21 million two years ago.

| FAMILY FEEDING PROGRAMS | <u>FOOD STAMP PROGRAM</u> | <u>Number of People</u> | <u>Total Bonus Stamps</u> |
|-------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | March 1971* | 10,600,000 | \$142,300,000 |
| | March 1970 | 5,074,560 | 70,794,057 |
| | March 1969 | 3,179,070 | 21,637,288 |
| CHILD NUTRITION | <u>DIRECT FOOD ASSISTANCE</u> | <u>Number of People</u> | <u>Cost of Food Distributed</u> |
| | March 1971* | 3,900,000 | \$ 27,200,000 |
| | March 1970 | 4,069,030 | 25,300,000 |
| | March 1969 | 3,773,389 | 23,100,000 |
| | <u>SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM</u> | <u>Total Participation</u> | <u>Number of children served Free or reduced price</u> |
| | March 1971* | 24,500,000 | 7,100,000 |
| | March 1970 | 22,400,000 | 5,000,000 |
| | March 1969 | 21,000,000 | 3,500,000 |
| | <u>SCHOOL BREAKFAST</u> | <u>Number of Children</u> | <u>Percent Served Free</u> |
| | March 1971* | 899,900 | 79% |
| | March 1970 | 525,000 | 70% |
| | March 1969 | 323,200 | 74% |
| | <u>NON-SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE FOR CHILDREN</u> | <u>Number of Children (year-round)</u> | |
| | March 1971* | 182,395 | |
| | March 1970 | 84,846 | |
| | March 1969 | 24,665 | |

* Preliminary estimates

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National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition Outlines Goals

The National Advisory Council on Child Nutrition held its first meeting on April 20 in Washington, D.C.

The Council, appointed in accordance with the amendments to the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts, is comprised of nine representatives from specific fields of expertise related to child nutrition. The Council includes experts in public health and nutrition, child welfare, school administration, food service management, school lunch administration, and education.

Four representatives of the Department of Agriculture serve on the Council, which is chaired by Assistant Secretary Richard Lyng.

The function of the Council, as stated in PL 91-248, is "to make a continuing study of the operation of programs carried out under the National School Lunch Act, the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, and related Acts under which meals are provided for children, with a view to determining how such programs may be improved.

"The Council shall submit to the President and the Congress annually a written report of the results of its study together with such recom-

mendations for administrative and legislative changes as it deems appropriate."

At the April meeting, the Council agreed on several major areas of concern for upcoming meetings:

- What should be the role of child nutrition programs?
- What should be the roles of Federal, State and local governments in child nutrition programs?
- How well are the current child nutrition programs meeting their objectives?

SALUTE TO SCHOOL LUNCH ceremonies will be held in the patio of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on Monday, June 7. Dignitaries will gather to recognize the great importance to which the program has grown, 25 years after enactment of the National School Lunch Act.

COMMENTS ON REGULATIONS: May 12 was the deadline for comments on the proposed regulations on fund/matching requirements under P.L. 91-248, amended school lunch and child nutrition acts.

May 17 was the deadline for submitting comments on the proposed Food Stamp Regulations.